



Michael J. Beach, PhD

Associate Director for Healthy Water
Chief, Waterborne Disease Prevention Branch
Division of Foodborne, Waterborne and Environmental Diseases
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

Michael Beach, PhD, is associate director for healthy water, a program he originated at CDC. He is also chief of the Waterborne Disease Prevention Branch in the Division of Foodborne, Waterborne and Environmental Diseases at CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases.

An epidemiologist and laboratorian with extensive experience in parasitic and other waterborne diseases, Dr. Beach leads a worldwide program to ensure access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and basic hygiene to protect people from waterborne illnesses.

Global Outreach

More than 700 million people in the world lack access to safe water. As a result, nearly 32 bus loads of children die each day because of diarrhea. Dr. Beach combats that trend by leading CDC's laboratory, epidemiology and public communication work to bring safe water, adequate sanitation, and basic hygiene wherever in the world need exists. He develops and tests new ways to allow people to make safe water in their homes or schools. He shows how new water system installations benefit health. And he leads testing and development of new methods for improving water quality or sewage treatment and disposal.

Domestic Disease Prevention

Dr. Beach launched the steering committee that developed America's first Model Aquatic Health Code. This provides a framework for state and local health departments to prevent drowning, injuries and the spread of recreational water illness at public swimming pools and spas.

Outbreak Investigation

Water not only sustains life, but also can cause illness. Dr. Beach has been part of more than 30 outbreak responses ranging from international crises to local water park outbreaks. When cholera erupted in Haiti in 2010, Dr. Beach was tapped as deputy incident manager and associate director for science for CDC's 6 month-long emergency response.

Health Promotion

Early in his career Dr. Beach learned how health communication and promotion helps advance public health outcomes. An advocate for sharing information in ways that people can understand and use it, he created CDC's Healthy Water and Health Swimming websites, now the world's premiere information source for safe swimming. He founded the Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week. The decade-old observance focuses national attention on swimming health and safety just as pools and waterparks around the country open for the summer season.

Training

Recognizing that every waterborne outbreak is local, Dr. Beach spearheads programs to provide tools and materials that local, county, state, and country health officials can use to investigate and solve waterborne disease outbreaks. From the first recreational waterborne disease outbreak in 1995, his advocacy for public availability of materials has taken him from the lone voice about recreational waterborne illness to being part of a nationwide partnership to combat increases in waterborne disease.

Dr. Beach received the PhD in biochemistry from Purdue University and completed postdoctoral research at the University of Massachusetts. He is an adjunct professor at the Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health.

Dr. Beach has authored more than 120 peer-reviewed articles, monographs, editorials, and chapters covering a broad range of public health topics. He is sought frequently as a lecturer on topics related to waterborne illness and safety. He is a member of the National Environmental Health Association and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. He was named one of the most influential people of the past 25 years by Aquatics International and received the 2011 Distinguished Ag Alumni award from the Purdue University Department of Agriculture.

